9

THE DIGNITY OF THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE, AND THE RELATIVE DUTIES OF MINISTER AND PEOPLE.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED IN THE

PARISH-CHURCH

OF

STOKE-NEWINGTON,

IN THE

COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX,

ON THE

SUNDAY NEXT AFTER INSTITUTION,

NOVEMBER 26, 1797. 12

By GEORGE GASKIN, D.D.

RECTOR OF THAT PARISH,

AND OF

ST. BENE'T GRACECHURCH, IN THE CITY OF LONDON.

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TO HIS

MUCH RESPECTED PARISHIONERS

AND FRIENDS,

THE INHABITANTS

OF

THE PARISH OF

STOKE-NEWINGTON,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE PRESENTED,

AND HUMBLY RECOMMENDED TO THEIR
SERIOUS ATTENTIVE PERUSAL,

BY THEIR RECTOR, AND

AFFECTIONATE SERVANT

IN CHRIST,

THE AUTHOR.

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1 COR. iv. 1.

LET A MAN SO ACCOUNT OF US, AS OF THE MINISTERS OF CHRIST, AND STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD.

IT will probably be recollected that when I communicated to you the circumstance of the death of the late venerable Rector * of this

* In a Sermon preached on the 29th of October, 1797, from Eccles. xii. 5. "Man goeth to his long home," I introduced what follows, viz.—"The text is "particularly suited to the moments, wherein it be-"comes my duty to inform the Inhabitants of Stoke-"Newington, of the death of my much revered friend "the Dean of Ely, our venerable Rector of this Parish, "whom it hath pleased GOD to remove, at the very ad-"vanced age of eighty-six years, from the honours and "blessings of this world, to those higher honours, and

this Pariſh, I took occaſion to ſay—" Whom " the Providence of GOD may lead to be his " ſucceſſor here, I know not. I truſt it will " be one, with whom you will be happy, " and

" ſuperior bleſſings, which, in a far better world, are the " portion of the righteous.

" After a long life, ſpent in the purſuit and diſſemination " of literature, the conſcientious diſcharge of duty, in the " Church, and in the Univerſity, the faithful and judi- " cious tranſaction of much buſineſs, connected with the " important ſtations he held, and the ordinary concerns " of an affectionate parent of a numerous offspring, he " is gone, we confidently truſt, into that world, and glo- " rious ſcene of things, where knowledge is not partial, " but complete, the Church is not militant, but triumphant, " and the ſole buſineſs of every one will be to chaunt '*Hal-* " *lelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth**,' in ex- " hilarating and harmonious notes. My inclination does " not lead me, on any occaſion, to a funeral panegyric. " I may, however, in perfect conſiſtency with this de- " claration, produce a fact or two, concerning our de- " ceaſed friend, which may be conſidered as highly cre- " ditable to any man.

" Too often it happens, in this world, that preferment " is ſought by undue means, and beſtowed for improper " conſiderations; but, it may confidently be affirmed, " with reſpect to Dean Cooke, that to the ſeveral ſtations, " which, in the College, in the Univerſity, and in the

* Rev. xix. 6.

" Church,

" and by whoſe miniſtry, and deportment, " you may be edified." Within the courſe of a few days from that time, I received information from the reſpectable and worthy Patron,

" Church, he held, talents and perſonal worth ever led " the way; and, in that collegiate Society *, where he " was the Provoſt, and where, for the laſt five and twenty " years of his life, he chiefly reſided, the moſt unqualified " reſpect was uniformly entertained for him; and the loſs " of his wiſdom, and judgment, in the various concerns " before them, will be ſenſibly felt. He was a learned, " a pious, and a wiſe man; and yet I am fully aware, " that, ſince the period of his elevation to more dignified " ſtations, his perſonal ſervice amongſt you has been very " little; but this I can aſſure you, on the experience, as " you know, of many years, that he was ever anxious to " hear of your welfare, and ſolicitous to provide that the " paſtoral office, in this Pariſh, ſhould be conſcientiouſly, " faithfully, and punctually diſcharged.

" The conſiderable ſhare I have had in it, during the " laſt eighteen years, prohibits me from ſaying how far " his wiſh has been accompliſhed. The great truths of " Chriſtianity, I truſt, however, have been faithfully " preached; the various obligations of the chriſtian life " earneſtly enforced; and the offices of the Church, in the " main, regularly and punctually diſcharged. In all theſe " particulars, I can ſafely ſay that I have faithfully endea-

* King's College, Cambridge.

Patron *, with whom I have had very little perſonal acquaintance, that it was his intention to preſent *me*, for inſtitution to the Rectory.

The manner of conferring this favor, as well as the favor itſelf conferred, are beyond what any merits of mine could have led me to expect. The gracious interpoſition of him, "whoſe Providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth," hath placed me in this intereſting ſituation; and it is my fervent prayer to the giver of every good gift,

" voured to ſupply the lack of perſonal ſervice in him,
" and at the ſame time to deliver my own ſoul. Of my
" deficiencies I am well aware; but I hope that GOD,
" and you, will pardon them.

" *Whom the Providence of* GOD *may lead to be his ſucceſſor*
" *here, I know not. I truſt it will be one, with whom you*
" *will be happy, and by whoſe miniſtry, and deportment, you*
" *may be edified.* The long connexion, I have had with
" you, will ever be remembered by me, with pleaſure,
" and gratitude; and my prayers for your temporal and
" ſpiritual well being, will not ceaſe with my miniſtra-
" tions here."

* The Rev. *Charles Weſton, M. A.* Prebendary of the Prebend of *Newington*, founded in the Cathedral Church of *St. Paul, London.*

that

that the cloſe and important union, which now ſubſiſts between you and me, may be productive of happineſs to each of us; and that, in the awful day, when I ſhall be called upon to render an account of my miniſtry, and you of your profiting under it, we may receive the plaudit of our Judge and Saviour.

After the long connexion, which has already ſubſiſted between us, with my ſentiments you cannot be unacquainted, and of my manner of life you muſt know ſomething. My ſentiments and views, in all matters of religion, are ſtrictly ſuch as the Church of England teaches, and conformable to the ſubſcriptions I have recently been called upon to make; and my politics are thoſe of ſteady loyalty to the King, and the ſincereſt attachment to our happy conſtitution in Church and State; which, I pray GOD evermore to protect, from the reſtleſs innovators that aſſault it. My manner of life—would to GOD it were more pure, more holy, more worthy of your imitation!—wherein ſoever it is wrong, may GOD pardon, and his grace correct it! And, if in any particulars, it be

right, may you all be led to follow me, as I follow Chriſt!

When we conſider what are the great objects of the Chriſtian miniſtry, and the nature of its duties—how cloſely interwoven are religion and happineſs—and how vexatious and ſhort-lived are concerns, that are merely worldly, it will clearly be perceived that the relationſhip ſubſiſting between a paſtor and his flock, is of the moſt endearing, intereſting nature; and that they are, or ought to be, united together, by the ſtrongeſt and moſt indiſſoluble ties. By this ſpiritual alliance, the Paſtor's intereſt is really bound up with that of his people; and, in ſeeking their welfare, he conſults his own. A mutual obligation is brought upon both parties: one is bound to fidelity and diligence, and the other to reſpect and attention.

There does not occur to me a more ſuitable topic of diſcourſe, on this occaſion, than that which reſults fairly from the text; whence, we are led to conſider—the dignity of *their* office, who are the "miniſters of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries of

GOD"—the duties, to which that ſacred office engages them—and the obligations of the people, amongſt whom they miniſter.

Upon theſe heads of diſcourſe, you will give me credit when I aſſure you I ſhall advance nothing but what is ſtrictly conformable to the views of our own Church, and what I verily believe myſelf, after much thought and conſideration.

I. With reſpect to the dignity of their office, who are "the miniſters of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries of GOD"—it will be ſuitable to premiſe, that they are *not the creatures, or mere ſervants, of the State.*

The ſecular honors, with which the Clergy are inveſted, and the legal ſecurity they have for the payment of their revenues, originate in the kindneſs, and proceed from the indulgence, of the ſtate. Theſe honors and theſe rights, however, are quite diſtinct from the ſpiritual commiſſion, which they bear, for the adminiſtration of our Lord's proper kingdom. They have no neceſſary connexion with it: they ſtand merely on the ground of human law: whilſt the ſpiritual commiſſion, or of-

fice, of the Miniſter, is altogether derived from a different ſource. There is, in the ſacred character, ſomewhat more divine, than can belong to the mere hired ſervants of the ſtate: there is ſomewhat, which the potentates of the earth can neither give, nor take away.

Nor is it to be ſuppoſed, that *the body of the people* are veſted, legitimately, with the power of conferring a right to adminiſter ſpiritual things, in the Church of Chriſt. I am aware that the ſectaries of moſt, perhaps all, denominations, plead for this power; and, the perſons, who miniſter before *them*, are *doubtleſs* their delegates. *Their* office, however, is the invention of the human brain; and their power is that, which the people pleaſe to give them. Such a ſpurious ſpiritual adminiſtration as this, the Church had not heard of, in her primitive and pureſt times. It was the leaven of a more modern æra: it had its grand prevalence, if not its riſe, in this kingdom, when anarchy rode triumphant, on the ruins of our civil and eccleſiaſtical conſtitution; and the doctrine,

at this moment, prevails chiefly, if not altogether, with thoſe, who long to ſee that anarchy revived amongſt us.

The dignity of the ſacred miniſtry has then another origin. They, who, legitimately, miniſter in ſpiritual things, are neither the *creatures of the State*, nor *the delegates of the People*: they are the "miniſters of Chriſt," and *therefore* "ſtewards of the myſteries of GOD." The prophet Malachi informs us that, of old, "the Prieſt was the meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts *;" and, in reference to the ſame idea, St. Paul tells us, that he was received as the "Angel," or Meſſenger, "of GOD, even as Chriſt Jeſus †" himſelf had been. "As my Father hath ſent me," ſaid our Lord to thoſe whom he ordained, "ſo ſend I you ‡;" and, "lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world ‖."

Accordingly, when the jewiſh Sanhedrim, who acted by the authority of the Romans, impriſoned the Apoſtles, and "commanded

* Mal. ii. 7. † Gal. iv. 14. ‡ John xx. 21.
‖ Matth. xviii. 20.

"them

" them not to ſpeak at all, nor teach in the " name of Jeſus *;" they replied, they had a commiſſion from GOD to preach the Goſpel, which muſt be obeyed at the utmoſt peril of their ſouls, and which no human power could ſet aſide. " Whether it be right, in " the ſight of GOD, to hearken unto you " more than unto GOD, judge ye †," ſaid thoſe intrepid and venerable men.

The ſame Miniſtry ſtill exiſts, by a lineal and regular *ſucceſſion*; and it is perpetuated now, as it was in the firſt ages, *by the impoſition of epiſcopal hands*, or, in other words, by the ordination of a Biſhop; and, as long as the Society, or Church, of Chriſt ſhall endure, which will be to the end of the world, his duly commiſſioned Miniſters will remain, to " make diſciples in all nations," and to act as " Stewards of the myſteries of GOD."

The Chriſtian Ordinances, ſaid the excellent Biſhop Horne ‡, " no man can adminiſter

* Acts iv. 18. † Act iv. 19.

‡ In a Viſitation Charge to the Clergy of Norwich, in 1791. The context runs thus—" The *conſtitution and uſe of* " *the Church of Chriſt* is a ſubject, on which our princi-

" ples,

" niſter to effect, but by GOD's own appoint-
" ment; at firſt, by his *immediate* appoint-
" ment, and afterwards by ſucceſſion and
" derivation from thence, to the end of the
" world. Without this rule we are open to
" impoſture, and are ſure of nothing; we
" cannot

" ples, for ſome years paſt, have been very unſettled, and
" our knowledge precarious and ſuperficial. Ignorance
" is dangerous here, becauſe there are ſo many, whoſe
" intereſt it is to flatter us in it, and to take advantage of it.
" The definition of the Church, contained in our Arti-
" cles, was purpoſely leſs definitive than it might have
" been, to avoid giving farther offence to thoſe whom we
" rather wiſhed to reconcile, but it does not appear that
" the Church hath gained any thing by its moderation;
" it hath rather loſt, becauſe in virtue of that moderation,
" it hath been pleaded againſt us, that eccleſiaſtical unity
" may be diſpenſed with, and that all our differences in
" this matter are only problematical and immaterial.

" But ſalvation is a gift of grace; that is, it is a free
" gift, to which we have no natural claim. It is not to
" be conceived within ourſelves, but to be received in
" conſequence of our Chriſtian calling, from GOD him-
" ſelf, through the means of his ordinances. Theſe can
" no man miniſter to effect, but by GOD's own appoint-
" ment; at firſt, by his *immediate* appointment, and after-
" wards by ſucceſſion and derivation from thence, to the
" end of the world. Without this rule we are open to
" impoſture,

" cannot be ſure that our Miniſtry is effec-
" tive, and that our Sacraments are realities.
" We are very ſenſible that the ſpirit of divi-
" ſion will never admit this doctrine, yet the
" ſpirit of charity muſt never part with it.
" Writers and teachers, who make it a
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" muſt never part with it. Writers and teachers, who
" make it a point to give no offence, treat theſe things
" very *tenderly*; but he, who in certain caſes give men
" no offence, will for that reaſon give them no in-
" ſtruction. Light itſelf is painful to weak eyes; but
" delightful to them, when grown ſtronger, and recon-
" ciled to it with uſe; and he who was inſtrumental in
" bringing them to a more perfect ſtate of viſion, though
" leſs acceptable at firſt, may yet, for his real kindneſs, be
" more cordially thanked afterwards, than if he had made
" the eaſe and ſafety of his own perſon the meaſure of his
" duty. It is by no means evident, that the Church hath
" ever recommended itſelf the more, by receding from
" any of its juſt pretenſions. Generoſity obliges and ſe-
" cures a friend; but an enemy conſtrues it into weak-
" neſs; and then, it never does any good. Yet the ad-
" verſaries of the Church of England have always been
" perſuading

"point to give no offence, treat these things "very *tenderly*; but he, who in certain "cases gives men no offence, will for that "reason give them no instruction." So thought, and so wrote, that mild and pious Prelate; and were such reflections as these duly attended to, the nature of the Christian ministry * would be much better understood, than usually it is; and there would surely be

"persuading her to make the experiment, and have pro-"mised great things from it: with what views, it cannot "be difficult to discover."

I cannot satisfactorily forego this opportunity of earnestly recommending to my parishioners, for their domestic use, and christian edification, the invaluable writings of this exemplary Bishop, particularly his "Commentary on the Book of Psalms," and his "Sermons" in 5 Vols. 8vo. Sold by *Rivingtons*, in St. Paul's Church-yard.

* Whoever is desirous of accurately investigating the subject of the Christian ministry, (and it is a subject that, in these times especially, claims the attention of the Laity, no less than that of the Clergy,) would do well to study such writings as the judicious Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity"—Abp. Potter's "Discourse of Church Government"—and, several pieces, in a very interesting collection of Tracts, entitled "THE SCHOLAR ARMED AGAINST THE ERRORS OF THE TIMES," printed for *Rivingtons*.

fewer

fewer to depreciate the office of the Minister, and fewer to invade it.

In times, indeed, when so many are attempting to degrade the God of our salvation, it is not to be wondered, that the office of his Ministers should be thought lightly of; and, they are then especially called upon, not only to assert his divine dignity, but also, after the example of St. Paul, to "magnify their office *."

Among such as entertain true views of the christian ministry, it is natural to expect a veneration for the Minister. They, indeed, who can believe the Clergy to be no other than the creatures of the State, or the servants of the Congregation, deputed and hired by them to do their business, may reasonably be expected to slight them, and be led to a contempt even of sound doctrines, so meanly recommended. But, others, who consider a Clergyman, as "the minister of Christ," a "messenger of the Lord of Hosts," will have a value for his character, which will not fail

* Rom. xi. 13.

to

to give weight to what he ſhall deliver; and, the regard, paid the repreſentative, is done, in reality, to the perſon, whom he repreſents. "He that heareth you," ſaid Chriſt to his Clergy, "heareth me; and he that deſpiſeth "you, deſpiſeth me; and he that deſpiſeth "me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me *."

When, therefore, St. Paul ſaid, "Let a "man ſo account of us, as of the miniſters "of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries "of GOD," and thereby intimated that a veneration and reſpect were due to that office and character, he meant not to "preach "*himſelf*, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord †; to whom that veneration ſhould ultimately be paid.

The true dignity of the office of the Miniſters of Chriſt, appears then to conſiſt, not in the worldly rank, or wealth, to which, by the piety of Princes, or by the munificence of chriſtian ſtates, ſome of them may happen to be advanced; but, in the ſpiritual commiſſion, with which they are inveſted, in the

* Luke x. 16. † 2 Cor. iv. 5.

concerns

concerns of man's ſalvation, and in the relation they bear to the great Head of the Church. "God hath committed unto us "the word of reconciliation: now then we "are Ambaſſadors of Chriſt, as though GOD "did beſeech you by us; we pray you, in "Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled unto "GOD *."

Unlike the dignities of the world, which are, generally ſpeaking, exonerations from labour, the office of the Miniſters of Chriſt binds them, by the ſtrongeſt ties, to a life of eſpecial circumſpection, and to induſtry in their ſacred calling.

2. The duties, to which the ſacred office engages them, was the next thing propoſed for conſideration.

What forcibly ſtrikes the moſt ſuperficial animadverter, upon the ſubject, is, that an exemplary, perſonal holineſs is the leading, characteriſtic obligation of Chriſt's Miniſters. "Thou, which teacheſt another, teacheſt "thou not thyſelf? Thou, that preacheſt a

* 2 Cor. v. 19, 20.

" man ſhould not ſteal, doſt thou ſteal? " Thou, that ſayeſt a man ſhould not commit " adultery, doſt thou commit adultery? Thou, " that abhorreſt idols, doſt thou commit " ſacrilege *?" Argumentation, of this ſort, is level to all capacities; and, GOD forbid that we ſhould not acknowledge the juſtneſs thereof, in its ſtrongeſt point of view.

Unholineſs of conduct in the Miniſter, does not indeed, of itſelf, vacate his miniſtry, nor *hinder the effect of the ſacraments*, as our Church teaches, in her *XXVIth article of religion*; but, it is a ſtumbling-block to unbelievers, and to ſuch as are not well-grounded in the Faith. It cauſeth the name of GOD to be blaſphemed—it brings the fouleſt diſcredit upon the Church of Chriſt—and will always tend to leſſen the effect of the moſt pertinent, and the beſt framed, exhortations. It is, therefore, freely acknowledged to be the duty of Chriſt's Miniſters, to exhibit, in their own temper and conduct, a portrait of the chriſtian life.

* Rom. ii. 21, 22.

To this, ſhould always be annexed, an eſpecial affection for the people of their charge. Every time a Clergyman looks on his congregation, it ſhould be with tender emotions of love, and an anxiety for their everlaſting intereſts. He ſhould view them, as the ranſomed of Chriſt's blood, whom the great Shepherd, that "laid down his "life for the ſheep *," has committed to his care.

In proportion as he is impreſſed with theſe ſentiments, his official duties will become his pleaſure, and he will diſcharge them, "not "only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience "ſake."

A conſtant and a reverent performance of the ſeveral liturgical offices, will be his delightful taſk; and, in ſuch performance, he will appear to be, becauſe he verily is, in earneſt. He will duly and regularly adminiſter the Sacraments *Chriſt hath ordained in his Church*; and he will endeavour, as far as may be, that all thoſe circumſtances of adminiſtra-

* John x. 15.

tion

tion be attended to, which are enjoined in the eccleſiaſtical rubrics, and which have ſo manifeſt a tendency to maintain a reverence for holy ordinances.

I am, therefore, led to perſuade myſelf that my pariſhioners will not think me too particular, or too preciſe, if, on all occaſions, and to all perſons, I refuſe to adminiſter the Sacrament of Baptiſm, in private Houſes*, by the

* I am aware that this practice greatly prevails, in the Metropolis, and its environs; and it is very extraordinary that a practice ſo indecorous, ſo irreverent, and ſo directly *contrary* to the plain preſcription of the Rubric, ſhould have become prevalent.

Baptiſm is a ſacred Rite, of Chriſt's own appointment, for the ſolemn admiſſion of perſons into the Society of Chriſtians. Where then can this Rite be *ſo properly* performed, as in the place dedicated to GOD, for holy uſes; eſpecially when we conſider that the Church has appointed a Form altogether adapted to *ſuch* place, and *which Form* cannot, *without great impropriety*, be uſed *in any other*.

In caſe of dangerous indiſpoſition, the eſſential parts of this Sacrament may be adminiſtered, in a private Houſe, by a form appointed for that purpoſe; but, afterwards, the Child is directed to be brought to the Church, to be

 received

the form expreſsly appointed to be uſed in the Church. A little attention to the rubric, and to the obvious circumſtances of religious decorum, would ſet every one right in this particular; as well as with reſpect to the prepoſterous deſire, which has ſometimes, I hope very rarely, been entertained, by the other ſex, of being what is called *churched* at home.

In his capacity, as a Preacher, his object will be to declare unto his Charge, from time

received *into the Congregation of Chriſt's Flock*, and for the performance of the remaining ſolemnities.

I muſt here make it my *particular*, and *very earneſt requeſt* to the Pariſhioners of Stoke-Newington, as I have heretofore *ſucceſsfully* done to the Pariſhioners of my other Pariſh, that they will *do me the favor* attentively to peruſe *the rubrics* in the Book of Common-Prayer, relating to the adminiſtration of Baptiſm—that they will ſeriouſly reflect upon the obſervations here made—and that, ſubmitting to the directions of the Church, they will *oblige me* by a willingneſs to bring their children, for Baptiſm, to the ſacred Font; where, I, or my aſſiſtant, will be happy chearfully to attend them, at the accuſtomed hours of divine Service, on *Sundays*, *Holidays*, *Wedneſdays*, or *Fridays*, or at *whatever other reaſonable time they ſhall be pleaſed to appoint*.

to

to time, " the whole counſel of GOD." He will aim at that perſpicuity of language and method, which may beſt tend to inſtruct; and at ſuch argument, earneſtneſs, and animation, as may be likely to perſuade. Above all, recollecting himſelf to be the " Miniſter of Chriſt," and that a " Steward " is to be found faithful," he will by no means be ſatisfied with the delivery of mere ethical maxims, but he will preach " the " truth, as it is in Chriſt Jeſus." He will embrace all ſuitable opportunities of aſſerting the Divinity of his bleſſed Maſter; and of teaching the neceſſity of Faith in the adorable Trinity. He will " ſet forth the original " corruption of the human nature; our " redemption, *according to GOD's eternal* " *purpoſe in Chriſt*, by the ſacrifice of the " Croſs; our ſanctification by the influences " of the divine Spirit; the inſufficiency of " our own good works; and the efficacy of " faith to Salvation *;" and, he will be

* See Abp. Secker's firſt Charge to the Clergy of the Dioceſe of Canterbury.

careful to maintain that doctrine, reſpecting the deſign and effect of the Sacraments, which the Scriptures, together with our Liturgy *, and Articles †, teach.

On

* "A Sacrament is an outward and viſible ſign of an "inward and ſpiritual Grace, given to us, ordained by "Chriſt himſelf, as *a means whereby we receive the ſame*, "and as *a pledge to aſſure us thereof*."

CATECHISM.

† "Sacraments ordained of Chriſt be not only badges, "or token of Chriſtian Men's profeſſion: but rather "they are certain *ſure witneſſes*, and *effectual ſigns of Grace*, "and GOD's good will towards us, by the which he doth "work inviſibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but "alſo ſtrengthen and confirm our Faith in him."

ART. XXV.

"Baptiſm is not only a ſign of profeſſion, and mark of "difference, whereby Chriſtian men are diſcerned from "others that be not chriſtened: but it is alſo a ſign of "regeneration, or new birth, whereby, as by an inſtru-"ment, they that receive baptiſm rightly, are grafted into "the Church: the promiſes of the forgiveneſs of ſins, and "of our adoption to be the Sons of GOD by the Holy "Ghoſt, are viſibly ſigned and ſealed; faith is confirmed, "and grace increaſed, by virtue of prayer unto GOD. The "Baptiſm of young Children is in any wiſe to be retained "in the Church, as moſt agreeable with the inſtitution of "Chriſt."

ART. XXVII.

"The

On the foundation of ſuch doctrines he will raiſe his ſuperſtructure of duties; and enforce "Holineſs, without which no man "ſhall ſee the Lord *." This Holineſs, as it reſpects GOD, our neighbour, and ourſelves, he will particulariſe, and inculcate, as opportunities and occaſions ſerve; not failing, when need ſo requires, to branch out the minute circumſtances of duty, and to exhibit the meaſure of Chriſtian obedience.

Theſe particulars he will enforce, by motives peculiarly chriſtian; which ſome of our beſt Divines have ſuppoſed to be "the only motives †," with which the chriſtian miniſter is concerned, and which certainly are the

"The Supper of the Lord is not only a ſign of the love "that Chriſtians ought to have among themſelves one to "another; but rather it is a Sacrament of our redemption "by Chriſt's death: inſomuch, that to ſuch as rightly, "worthily, and with faith receive the ſame, the bread "which we break, is a partaking of the Body of Chriſt; "and likewiſe the cup of bleſſing is a partaking of the "Blood of Chriſt."

ART. XXVIII.

* Heb. xii. 14.

† See Biſhop Horſley's excellent Charge to the Clergy of the Dioceſe of St. David's, in 1790.

only motives, by which religious and moral duty can be effectually enforced. And, while the neceſſity of univerſal holineſs is thus urged, he will equally urge that of our being "found "in Chriſt; not having our own righteouſ-"neſs, which is of the law, but the righte-"ouſneſs which is of GOD by faith *."

To the riſing generation, catechetical inſtruction, in the nature of our baptiſmal engagement, and the principles of the chriſtian faith, is of the utmoſt importance; and to this circumſtance, the Miniſter of Chriſt will find it neceſſary to direct his attention, in a degree proportionate to the exigence of his particular flock. The prejudices of theſe times, I am aware, operate forcibly againſt the good old practice of ſending youth to be publickly catechized, in the Church; and, in the metropolis, and its environs, there are other impediments againſt the obſervance of this eccleſiaſtical order; ſo that, unfortunately, the practice here is almoſt extinct †.

Laſtly,

* Philip. iii. 9.

† The duty, however, of carefully obſerving that their children be able both to repeat, and to underſtand *the Catechiſm*,

Laſtly, The faithful Miniſter of Chriſt, equally removed, in his deportment and converſation, from the moroſeneſs of the cynic, and the levity of the thoughtleſs, will endeavour to render himſelf, and his miniſtrations, acceptable to the people of his charge, by his affability and condeſcenſion—by being "gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, "in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe "themſelves*,"—by ſhunning no intercourſe that is innocent, and tends to cultivate har-

techiſm, reverts more forcibly upon Parents; who ſhould recollect, that if young perſons be not inſtructed in "the Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt," they will ſcarcely be profited by the beſt diſcourſes they may happen to hear—they will be very liable to be driven about, by any blaſt of falſe doctrine—or, they will grow up, with the diſpoſition of Gallio, and "care for none of theſe things."

They ſhould likewiſe be particularly careful not to ſend their children, of either ſex, to Schools, where inſtruction in *the Catechiſm of the Church*, and the ſound principles it inculcates, is likely to be neglected.

At no period of time, could ſtronger reaſons be produced, for attending to theſe particulars, than at the preſent. The calamities of France in particular, and of Europe in general, originate in the diſſemination of bad principles, political, moral, and religious.

* 2 Tim. ii. 24.

mony

mony—by endeavouring, as far as may be, to make ſuch occaſional intercourſe turn to edification—and, by doing all the good in his power! To which we ſhould ſubjoin, that he will be particularly happy to preſcribe, at the bed of languiſhing, the healing medicines of the Goſpel, for the awakening of the Sinner, and the conſolation of the Saint.

Thus, I have pointed out, in that ſummary way, which ſuits the brevity of a diſcourſe of this ſort, the DUTIES, to which "the Mini-"ſters of Chriſt, and Stewards of the myſte-"ries of GOD," are engaged. Their office being of divine inſtitution, the duties annexed to it are bound upon them by the founder of the Church; and, it follows, that

3. There are correſponding duties to be looked for, on the part of thoſe, amongſt whom they miniſter.

It muſt be obvious to every unbiaſſed mind, that the ſacred character of a "Mini-ſter of Chriſt," *challenges reſpect* from thoſe, who profeſs themſelves to be Chriſt's diſciples. Upon this ſubject, I have already touched, and it is not neceſſary, at preſent, to add much

to

to what has been already advanced. "We "beſeech you, Brethren," ſays St. Paul to the Theſſalonians, "to know them which labour "among you, and are over you in the Lord, "and admoniſh you; and to eſteem them "very highly in love, for their work's ſake *." Unleſs men have ſome antecedent reſpect to the character of him that ſpeaks, they will hardly pay a proper attention, or entertain a ſuitable regard, to what he ſays. It is therefore of the utmoſt conſequence, that the office, and character of a Chriſtian Paſtor, be looked up to, with veneration; and that no prejudice againſt him be haſtily taken up.

The next circumſtance of duty, on the part of the people, is *attendance upon their miniſtrations*. It is from "the Stewards of Chriſt's myſteries" alone, that his Sacraments are to be had; and it is only in communion with *them*, that Chriſtians can publickly, and ſocially, obſerve the other ordinances of the Goſpel. "The Prieſt's lips ſhould keep "knowlege, and they ſhould ſeek the law "at his mouth." "The Miniſter of Chriſt

* 2 Theſſ. v. 12, 13.

"is

" is the Meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts *," and he is ordained purpoſely to " preach the " Word †;" which can imply no leſs than that the people ſhould attend, and give ear to his preaching. He is not only to tell them what they knew nothing of before; but he is alſo to " ſtir up" their " minds," and " put" them " in remembrance ‡." They, who boaſt of their knowledge, to excuſe their attendance upon the word preached, have as much occaſion as any to be taught. *They* do not ſufficiently conſider preaching as the ordinance of GOD, inſtituted to " miniſter grace " unto the hearers ‖;" and therefore that men of greater parts, and more learning than the duly authoriſed Preacher, need not be aſhamed to attend his miniſtry. GOD's grace is to be found in the ways he has pointed out; and, if *they* be ſuperciliouſly neglected, that grace will be looked for in vain.

Another duty incumbent upon Chriſtian Believers, is to *afford a competent maintenance* to the Miniſters of Chriſt. " Do ye not

* Mal. ii. 7. † 2 Tim. iv. 2. ‡ 2 Pet. i. 12, 13.
‖ Eph. iv. 29.

know,

" know, that *among the Jews*, they which " miniſtered about holy things, lived of the " things of the Temple? And they which " waited at the Altar, were partakers with " the Altar? Even ſo hath the Lord ordained, " that they which preach the Goſpel, ſhould " live of the Goſpel *." In places, where, the munificence of founders and benefactors, and the wiſdom and piety of the Legiſlature have ſecured a legal maintenance to the Clergy, individual Chriſtians have only to " ſet apart their tithes with gladneſs," and chearfully to pay the allotments ſeverally demandable of them; but, where no ſuch legal and competent proviſion hath been made, that Scripture ſhould be called up to the recollection of the people, which ſaith, " Thou ſhalt " not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the " corn; and the Labourer is worthy of his " reward: For our ſakes, no doubt, this is " written, that he that ploweth, ſhould plow " in hope; and that he that threſheth in hope, " ſhould be partaker of his hope †."

The laſt duty I ſhall mention, is that of *prayer* for " the Miniſters of Chriſt." St.

* 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. † 1 Cor. xi. 9.

Paul said to his theſſalonian converts, "finally, Brethren, pray for us *." The miniſtry they have received is a "treaſure," which they "have in earthen veſſels †." Their charge is a weighty one—their ſteps are narrowly watched, and their haltings noticed—the temptations that are common to man, aſſault *them*—and they have therefore eſpecial need of the good wiſhes and prayers of the faithful, not only that they may ſave their own ſouls, but alſo that they may be more effectually inſtrumental in forwarding the ſalvation of thoſe committed to their care.

I have now gone through what I propoſed. I have briefly pointed out the dignity of their office, who are "the Miniſters of Chriſt, and "Stewards of the myſteries of GOD"—the duties, to which that ſacred office engages them—and, the obligations of the people, among whom they miniſter.

This I have done principally to ſhew you what is my ſenſe of the freſh engagements, under which I am brought, in the very near relation I now bear to you; to which, I will

* 2 Theſſ. iii. 1. † 2 Cor. iv. 7.

only

only ſubjoin an aſſurance, that it is my earneſt deſire, with GOD's help, to fulfil them.

Let me then, my Brethren, hope for the aſſiſtance of your prayers, and for the gratification of your encouragements, that I may be enabled, at leaſt in ſome degree, chearfully to fulfil the miniſtry amongſt you, whereunto I am appointed. Let me have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing the ſervices performed in this Houſe of GOD, more and more frequented *, by thoſe peculiarly related to it; and, let me intercede with Governors of Houſeholds, that they will direct their domeſtics hither.

Thus,

* It would give me particular ſatisfaction to find a better attendance upon divine Service, on *Week Days*. Happily for many Inhabitants of Stoke-Newington, they are not hindered, by the preſſing calls of domeſtic duty, or other buſineſs, from theſe acts of devotion. Let me, then, in the name of GOD, conjure ſuch perſons to reflect, whether they can give a good reaſon for their conſtant abſence from his houſe, on *Wedneſdays*, *Fridays*, and *Holidays*—and whether the little time ſuch attendances would occupy, would not, by their publickly uniting in the ſervice of GOD, be well and profitably employed.

True

Thus, taking "ſweet counſel together," let us go on to "walk in the Houſe of GOD "as friends *." Thus, let us be "building "up ourſelves, on our moſt holy faith †;" learning how we all "ought to walk, and "to pleaſe GOD ‡;" and abounding more and more in that ſcience, which maketh men "wiſe unto ſalvation ‖."

"Now unto him, who alone can keep us "from falling, and preſent us faultleſs before "the preſence of his glory, with exceeding "joy; to the only wiſe GOD OUR SAVIOUR, "be glory and majeſty, dominion and power, "both now and ever. Amen §."

True Religion is the higheſt ornament and privilege of mankind, and a devout uſe of the ſeveral *means of grace* is the beſt method, whereby to obtain a well-grounded *hope of glory*. If this idea were ſufficiently impreſſed upon the minds of Chriſtians, we ſhould not ſee ſo many as we do, conſtantly, and without a bluſh, turn their backs upon THE LORD'S TABLE, and neglect the CHIEF ORDINANCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

* Pſal. liv. 9. † Jude 20. ‡ 1 Theſſ. iv. 1.
‖ 2 Tim. iii. 15. § Jude 24, 25.

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